

STATEMENT OF RAYMOND A. PECK, ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL HIGHWAY
TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION, BEFORE THE HOUSE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SURFACE TRANSPORTATION CONCERNING THE AGENCY'S
FY 1984 BUDGET REQUEST, FEBRUARY 23, 1983.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss NHTSA's FY 1984 budget request for the title 23 State and community highway safety programs. Accompanying me is Mr. George Reagle, our Associate Administrator for Traffic Safety Programs.

I would like to commend the members of this Subcommittee, and the full Committee, for your leadership in the passage of last year's Alcohol Traffic Safety and National Driver Register Programs, as well as for the highway safety provisions contained in title II of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982. Those Acts continue the funding of programs which are vital to the Nation's highway safety.

NHTSA's budget request affirms the Agency's commitment to strengthening the Nation's highway safety programs and focuses our resources on those programs which have been determined to be most effective in reducing highway accidents and resulting deaths and injuries.

For FY 84 we are requesting: (1) an appropriation of \$55.8 million for programs under the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 and the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act, which includes \$2.2 million for implementation of the new National Driver Register system mandated last year; (2) an appropriation of \$22.2 million from the Highway Trust Fund for the \$403 Highway Safety Research and Development Program under title 23; and (3) obligations of \$116.95 million from the Highway Trust Fund for Highway Traffic Safety Grants under title 23, based on a proposed \$77 million obligation limitation for the \$402 State and Community Highway Safety Program, \$38.0 million for the new alcohol incentive program, and \$2.0 million for the new safety education program. The Highway Traffic Safety Grants program has total FY 84 contract authority of \$148.1 million.

With respect to the \$402 State and Community Highway Safety Program, we have continued our efforts to make the most effective use of highway safety grants. On April 1, 1982, NHTSA and the FHWA issued a final rule, as directed by the Omnibus Budget

Reconciliation Act of 1981, which: (1) identifies six highway safety programs as being the most effective in reducing accidents, injuries, and fatalities; (2) provides for the continued eligibility of those programs for §402 funding; and (3) establishes a mechanism by which additional programs identified by a State may be eligible for such funding. The six national priority areas are: Alcohol Countermeasures; Police Traffic Services; Emergency Medical Services; Traffic Records; Occupant Protection; and Safety Construction and Operational Improvements.

In determining which programs should receive national attention and Federal funding, we examined the magnitude of each highway safety problem, the national trend or direction of the problem, the impact of existing countermeasures, and the potential for further impact on the specific problem by the Federal, State, and local parties. By focusing on these areas, we believe that the §402 program can continue to achieve measurable accident reductions. Accordingly, our §402 grants will be used in FY 84 to sustain and accelerate activities in these key areas.

Our major management objectives for the \$402 program during FY 84 will be directed toward resolving problems facing Federal and State officials in those key problem areas which offer the highest payoff potential. Special emphasis will be placed on improving program impact, cost effectiveness, and efficiency.

Alcohol safety will be given even stronger emphasis in FY 84. In addition to the basic State and community alcohol programs supported by the \$402 grant program, we now have the \$408 Alcohol Incentive Program enacted last year. This incentive program is intended to motivate the States to expand and strengthen their efforts over and above the \$402 base level to ensure that permanent benefits in this area will be secured.

In accordance with the Act, NHTSA issued a final rule on January 31, 1983 establishing the criteria for the two types of incentive grants, basic grants and supplemental grants, for States that implement effective programs to reduce drunk driving. Our best estimate is that as many as 32 States may qualify for

incentive grants in FY 84, which will mean obligations of \$38.0 million for this program.

Six highway safety information and education pilot projects, which will operate for a one-year period, will be conducted, in part, during FY 84. These projects, which were authorized in 1978 but funded for the first time in FY 83 as a result of the 1982 STA Act, will be designed to use television and radio to develop and evaluate techniques, methods, and practices to achieve maximum measurable effectiveness in reducing traffic accidents, injuries, and deaths. We are estimating \$2 million in obligations for FY 84 for this effort.

The Alcohol Traffic Safety and National Driver Register Program, which was enacted last year, directs that the existing National Driver Register (NDR) system be upgraded to permit the electronic transfer of licensing data among the States on problem drivers. Accordingly, our FY 84 budget includes a request for \$2.2 million for the implementation of this new system. These funds will be used to complete the design of the system and

to select the four States that will participate in the pilot program which the statute requires as preliminary to the system's development. Our efforts in this area will also include continued improvements in the present system to provide faster responses to NDR inquiries by the States.

The \$403 Highway Safety Research and Development Program supports all of NHTSA's highway safety program activities. Since approximately four out of five reported highway accidents are due to driver errors, this program is one of our highest priorities. Accordingly, we are requesting \$22.2 million for highway safety research and development for FY 84.

For FY 84, our highway safety research efforts are based on a recently completed program planning process which assured that our resources are addressing significant safety problems; analyzing alternative means of achieving safety goals; and yielding effective solutions to these safety problems at reasonable cost. Resources have already been allocated to place greater emphasis on the issues of safety belt usage and alcohol countermeasures, with

the remaining efforts devoted to those items in other areas which promise the greatest likelihood of productive results. The information and technical developments and other products resulting from this research are provided to the States for use in their highway safety programs.

This completes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you have.

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